

Opening Statement – Budget Estimates
20 October 2019
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Thank you, Senator McDonald, for the opportunity to make a short opening statement.

I am delighted to be here today, as it's been some time since we last had the opportunity to appear before the Committee.

Late last year and early this year Australia experienced terrible bushfires. CASA supported last year's bushfire efforts with approvals of 66 aircraft [domestic and Foreign] to operate on bushfire support activities nationwide. Tragically one of those aircraft was lost along with three of our international colleagues. This terrible event remains front of mind in this year's efforts with approvals for 69 aircraft [domestic and Foreign] already granted so far.

We also had COVID-19. During the pandemic we have been flexible in our regulatory approach and offered relief to industry wherever possible. Some of the relief measures include automatically renewing medical certificates by six months, now extended out to 12 months. Automatically extended Air Operator's Certificate's, including remotely piloted aircraft operator's certificates by six months and deferring pilot and air traffic controller training and checking requirements and extending the transition timeframe for the Fatigue rules by 12 months. Most of our relief measures are planned to end in March 2021 and we are now looking at any ways we can further support the industry after that time.

Although we have been focussed on supporting the aviation industry through these difficult times, we also progressed many key initiatives including implementing commercial drone registration from 30 September 2020 [3,484 Registration. 2,008 Accreditations - 19/10/20], continue the digital transformation of our business and the extensive consultation looking towards the implementation of the remainder of the already approved regulatory suite in December 2021. We have continued all of our lines of business, although many have been modified in this new COVID-19 environment.

We are also focussing our efforts on our long term financial health as our current funding model heavily relies on fuel excise, which is significantly impacted at the moment. We have been aware for many years of the need to develop a more sustainable funding model and the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly highlighted these arrangements.

Thank you, Senator McDonald – I am happy to take questions from the Committee.